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**TRIBUTE TO THE LATE  
PRESIDENT KENNEDY**

**a broadcast talk by**

**Osagyefo, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah  
President of the Republic of Ghana  
on 25th November, 1963**

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**TRIBUTE TO THE LATE PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY**  
**25th NOVEMBER, 1963**

It is with deep sorrow that I speak to you today, and pay tribute to the memory of the late President John F. Kennedy, a great world statesman and a relentless fighter for equality and human dignity.

The whole world has been shocked and bewildered at President Kennedy's tragic death by assassination, in the prime of his life. In spite of his brief term of office, President Kennedy has made an indelible mark on the history of our time. He will be remembered as a distinguished champion for peace and the rights of man. His inspiration, his tremendous courage, his integrity and the warmth of his feeling for his fellow men will be a beacon to those who share his convictions and aspirations.

John Kennedy's achievements in international affairs have been remarkable. We in Africa will remember him, above all, for his uncompromising stand against racial and religious bigotry, intolerance and injustice. His courage and steadfastness in pursuing the objectives of racial equality in his own country will always remain as his greatest contribution to the struggle against racialism and racial arrogance. His singleness of purpose toward these objectives may have been a cause of this ignominious assassination. Whatever the cause, I am convinced that the supreme sacrifice which he was called upon to make, will not be lost on those sections of American society whose outmoded attitudes and prejudices constitute a blot on the American image.

By his death, the world has witnessed the evil manoeuvres of imperialism, capitalism and racialism. Let us hope that John Kennedy's death will shame the racist and reactionary bigots in America into a more enlightened outlook on the problems of peace and social injustice.

President Kennedy was a remarkable man and a man of his century. Born to wealth, he was yet deeply sensitive to the problems and hopes of the common man and of the underprivileged. This aspect of his character was reflected both in his domestic and international policies.

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His ideas on economic aid, social welfare and world peace were far in advance of large sections of influential opinion in his own country. As the youngest President ever of the United States, he was truly a representative of our century—a century of expanding opportunities for all, the elimination of poverty, ignorance and disease, and the establishment of a new order of truth, equality and social justice.

With a true sense of history, John Kennedy carried on, in a most dramatic manner, what Abraham Lincoln began one hundred years ago; like Lincoln, he was prevented from carrying his endeavours to the great heights he had set for himself, by an assassin's bullet. As a man endowed with great human warmth, his relationship with people was always friendly and sincere.

I was privileged to meet President Kennedy and his wife in Washington in 1961, not long after he became President of the United States.

In fact, I think I am right in saying that I was the first Head of State to whom he granted audience immediately after he had been sworn in as the President of the United States.

I was deeply impressed by his wisdom and sincerity. His presence—his sense of understanding and appreciation of the grave issues confronting our world, and his genuine interest in the solution of the problems confronting developing countries made me regard him, even then, as a man from whom the world could expect great things, as a man who could become one of the most important leaders of our time.

It really takes a man like John Kennedy to say—and I quote from his writings:

“A man does what he must in spite of personal consequences, in spite of obstacles and dangers and pressure—and that is the basis of all human morality”.

We in Africa can have no more appropriate epitaph to John Kennedy's memory than his own words spoken in his inaugural address :—

“ . . . whether you are citizens of America or of the world, ask of us the same high standards of strength and sacrifice that we shall ask of you. With a good conscience

our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God's work must truly be our own. ”

To his dear wife and children, I send deepest condolences on my own behalf and on behalf of the people of Ghana.

Osagyefo the President has sent the following message to President Lydon B. Johnson, President of the United States of America:—

“ I am bewildered and shocked at the tragic news of the assassination of my personal friend and great statesman, John F. Kennedy. President Kennedy was a distinguished champion in the great fight for the rights of man. It needed a man of President Kennedy's courage to take the uncompromising stand which characterised his policies for the achievement of racial equality and human dignity. By his notable achievements during his unexpectedly brief term of office President Kennedy left a profound mark on the course of human history. May his supreme sacrifice fortify men of goodwill to redouble their efforts towards the achievement of justice, freedom, equality and the brotherhood of man. Please accept on behalf of myself, the Government and people of Ghana profound condolences on this great loss. ”

*TO: MRS. JOHN F. KENNEDY*

“ I have received with profound shock and distress the news of the assassination of your beloved husband and my great friend. By his death the world has lost a wise and courageous statesman whose contribution to the maintenance of world peace and security and whose uncompromising stand for human rights and dignity will long be remembered. Please accept my deepest sympathy in your bereavement and May God grant you strength and fortitude in this hour of tribulation. ”





PUBLISHED BY THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND  
PRINTED BY THE GOVERNMENT PRINTING DEPARTMENT, ACCRA, GHANA